



## *Tracer Study on the Employment Outcomes of the College of Hospitality Management in the University of Eastern Pangasinan*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The University of Eastern Pangasinan is a government-owned university in Pangasinan province, Philippines. The university was founded in 2005 by the first president of the university Hon. Ramon “Mon-Mon” V. Guico III, Governor of Pangasinan. UEP is now notable for offering free tuition in line with the goal of the first president that each family will have at least one professional. The university is mandated to provide advanced instruction in the tourism and hospitality industry, business, as well as in technological and professional fields. Its main campus is located in McArthur Highway, Canarvacanan, Binalonan, Pangasinan.

UEP became fully operational in 2005 at Binalonan upper market. The university’s main campus as most Pangasinenses know it today, especially within the 5<sup>th</sup> District of Pangasinan and other neighboring provinces like La Union Tarlac, and Nueva Ecija is the result of fusion of the nine independent colleges namely: College of Teacher Education, College of Criminal Justice Education, College of Industrial Security, College of Midwifery, College of Information Technology, College of Accountancy and Business Administration, College of Agricultural Business, and College of Hospitality Management.

Hospitality Management

The Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management was first offered at UEP in 2005 under the supervision of the first president Hon. Ramon “Mon-Mon” V. Guico III. The program declared the first batch of graduates in 2009. The program was established to prepare the student to become an effective promoter of the country’s natural and cultural attractions to domestic and international travelers.

HM Program Outcomes

Program outcomes are statements about the knowledge, skills and attitudes the graduate of a formal program should have. It deals with the general aspect of graduation for a particular program and the competencies and expertise a graduate will possess after completion of the program.

In UEP, Program Outcomes include the following: (1) Implement relevant laws about hospitality management in the workplace, (2) promote local tourism products and hospitality services in the national and global environment, (3) execute administrative and managerial skills relevant to the industry, (4) perform specific financial transactions and reports in the hospitality industry, (5) apply various channels of communication in dealing/ communicating with guests and peers, (6) display and perform risk management during the operation, (7) apply information and communication technology skills to stimulate changes in the field of the hospitality industry, (8) adopt good moral and ethical behavior in dealing with the organization, society, government and other related businesses,

and (9) deal with colleagues, customers and other stakeholders in the context of service excellence and satisfaction.

Tracer studies are crucial for collecting and analyzing graduate employment data, helping universities assess the effectiveness of their programs and the employability of their graduates (Sabando et al., 2023). Villanueva et al. (2023) argue that despite government efforts to increase employment rates, competition for qualified graduates remains high.

Tracer studies help universities measure the competitiveness of their graduates and identify necessary curriculum adjustments. Tapfuma et al. (2021) found that qualifications influence job choice among tourism and hospitality graduates, but high unemployment levels also play a significant role. Stemele and Sucheran (2021) highlight the seasonality of the hospitality and tourism industry, which affects employment rates.

The term 'Hospitality Industry' and 'Hospitality Management' have gained broad acceptance and legitimacy as descriptors of a range of economic activities, and their management, concerned with the public provision of food, accommodation, food, and related services for those who are away from home.

Moreover, Carl Rigel 2020, asserts that hospitality education is "a field of multidisciplinary study which brings the perspectives of many disciplines, especially those found in the social sciences, to bear on particular areas of application and practice in the hospitality and tourism, simply put it as a field of devoted to preparing students, generally for management positions in hospitality. The hospitality students benefit from merging several educational models, including business and social sciences."

Furthermore, some basic entry-level positions can lead to advancement to management roles through experience gained in various departments (Kim, McCleary, & Kaufman, 2020). Some students may be seeking the experience necessary to become successful entrepreneurs, managers, or be their own boss. Another characteristic that may attract the hospitality majors is the job security that comes from the growing number of jobs that are available within the industry (Beverage, 2019).

The hospitality industry growth rate indicates a need for education, training, and career guidance to provide those who desire careers in hospitality with greater job opportunities, advancement, and stability in the industry (BLS, 2019). The hospitality management student has many career choices as a result of the growth within the industry. Employers and industry educators also provide educational opportunities, training, and certifications. They have multiple career choices for managerial positions within various hospitality segments. They can look forward to many entry-level management positions within accommodations, food services, and hospitality operations segments such as recreation and leisure segments after the completion of their education and training processes (Kim et al. 2020).

To explore a variety of career options that fit their interests, personalities, and necessary education, hospitality management students should start their career planning process as early as possible. Students in the hospitality industry who begin the career planning process early will be able to complete career assessments, learn about professional development programs, take part in training programs like internships, obtain the required certifications, and investigate careers of interest to narrow down their options. Undergraduates ought to benefit from the educational opportunities offered by universities. They will be better equipped to make wise selections in their professional careers if they get the chance to investigate a variety of job options in the classroom. Additionally, they will acquire knowledge and abilities that will facilitate their transition from student to professional in their chosen field.

According to Behsudi, 2020, the tourism industry contributed to global labor with 25% of its newly created jobs in 2019, accounting for 1 in 4 globally with 33% of all jobs or approximately 333 million. Among the positive impacts of the tourism sector is the tourist receipt or the total spending of the tourists, which accounted for 1.8 trillion dollars in 2019, equal to 6.8% of the world's total exports (The World Bank, 2023). Additionally, the importance of employment as a pathway to economic development, social inclusion, and well-being has long been recognized. Employment is a central element in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which emphasizes promoting productive employment and decent work for all (Goal 8). The international statistical standards relating to employment have undergone significant changes over time, designed to improve their relevance and depth for policymakers. The most significant of these changes came at the 19th International

Conference of Labor Statisticians in 2013 when the international community adopted the first statistical definition of work alongside forms of work framework. Within the new framework, employment is defined as work performed in return for pay or profit. This is narrower than the scope of the previous definition which included some unpaid activities such as subsistence work.

Job mismatch is prevalent in the hospitality sector, where employers often hire applicants, whose courses are not aligned with the industry as long as they possess qualifications such as communication skills and a willingness to be trained. As a result, Aguilar (2021) concludes that while the industry opens opportunities to a diverse workforce, many tourism and hospitality graduates face unemployment or underemployment, receiving lower pay than expected for their qualifications. Some hospitality establishments have shifted paradigms regarding employee regularization, which can hinder BSHRM graduates from securing permanent positions. Quario II et al. (2020) noted that high standards of service and technical skills are crucial for securing regular employment in a competitive industry. Globally, employability tracer studies, such as those conducted by Putra et al. (2022) among hospitality graduates, reveal that a portion of graduates remain unemployed for reasons like job searching, family matters, or further studies.

In the Philippines, Sabando et al. (2023) found that 49% of BSHM graduates are employed, primarily in food and beverage roles, while 45% are unemployed. Tracer studies are essential for evaluating the effectiveness of curricula in producing competitive graduates and monitoring their employability, thus ensuring quality assurance in educational institutions. Monitoring employability status is crucial for assessing the quality of education provided by higher education institutions. Studies, such as those by Roman et al. (2023), show the importance of tracking employment outcomes to understand the effectiveness of educational programs. The role of higher education in nation-building and economic growth is significant, as institutions aim to equip students with the necessary skills for better job prospects postgraduation (Unlanday, 2021).

The International Labour Organization defines unemployment as not working, being ready to work, and actively seeking a job. In 2020, youth employment declined by 8.7%, significantly increasing the global youth unemployment rate to 16.4%. In the Philippines, unemployment is a major issue, with 3.7 million individuals unemployed in 2021, the highest level in nearly a decade, up from 2.9 million in 2020 (Butiong et al., 2023).

## METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology of the study. It presents the design, population, locale, data-gathering procedure, and statistical treatment. It presents how the process was implemented. The study will utilize a descriptive quantitative survey approach to answer the research questions. A descriptive quantitative research design is a study that describes the nature of the situation as it exists at the time of study and explores the causes of a particular phenomenon. Descriptive research design due to its suitability whenever subjects vary among themselves and one is interested to know the extent to which different conditions and situations are obtained among subjects. Quantitative type of research is used for this study. It is the systematic investigation of observable phenomena via statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. The aim of using close-ended questions is to draw concrete conclusions about the respondents. It has derived patterns, traits, and behaviors of the respondents. It is used to understand a respondent, their attitude, or opinion about the phenomenon. Since the respondents were in a comfortable environment, the characteristics observed were natural and effective. This research will answer the employment outcomes of graduates from the College of Hospitality Management at the University of Eastern Pangasinan.

### Population and Locale of the Study

The locale of the study and population included the graduates from the College of Hospitality Management at the University of Eastern Pangasinan year 2009 to 2024. A total of 380 respondents were included in the study. Random sampling will be utilized to obtain the number of respondents. The respondents were taken from the year 2009 to 2024. The respondents were identified from the different years that they graduated that met the inclusion criteria. The respondent must be graduated

from 2009 to 2024. Samples that did not have reliable information about their graduate in the HM Department and did not meet the minimum requirements were excluded from the study.

### Data Gathering Tools

A self-made questionnaire was used in the study. The indicators were based on research, kinds of literature, and books. A total of 65 items were answered by the respondents using a 5-point Likert scale. The tool has four parts: part one contains the demographic data of the respondents, part two has the indicators related to factors affecting the employment outcomes of the graduates, the third part includes the impact of linkages/partnership membership organization, and the last part covers the proposed action plan to improve the effectiveness of the academic curriculum.

### Gathering Procedure

Consent from the respondent will be obtained to safeguard the rights of the respondent. The respondents will be informed that they had the right to withdraw from the research anytime they wished to withdraw, and they were not coerced to complete the research. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to the respondents. They were told that there would be no identification as to their names and linkages to their companies and the answers were purely for research purposes and were not to be used in any other endeavors.

Before data gathering, a permission letter will be given to the school registrar to get the total number of graduates. In obtaining the number of respondents per year, a random selection of graduates from different years were given questionnaires to meet the 380 respondents. Consent was obtained from the respondents through a letter. If they agree to participate in the research, the research tools will be provided to them. After accomplishing the tool, the researcher checked the tool if there were missed items. In case of missed items, the researcher asked the respondent to answer missed items. Gratitude after the tool was expressed to the respondents.

### Treatment of the Data

The study will be utilizing mean, t-test, and F-test in the study. The t-test will be used to determine the difference in the satisfaction index of employees along gender while the F-Test will be used for variable years of service and educational attainment. Scheffé test was used to test the differences among groups since the F-test revealed significant differences.

#### *Rubric to Interpret the Profile of the respondents*

	<b>Range</b>	<b>Descriptive Interpretation</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>
4	3.26 – 4.00	Highly Satisfied (HS)	Overall influence is perceived to have efficient promotion system and receptive work environment.
3	2.51 – 3.25	Satisfied (S)	Overall influence is perceived to have effective promotion system and flexible work environment.
2	1.76 – 2.50	Moderately Satisfied (MS)	Overall influence is perceived to have reactive promotion system and with decent work environment.
1	1.00 – 1.75	Slightly Satisfied (SS)	Overall influence is perceived to have good promotion system and poor work environment.

Table 2.

*Rubric to interpret the factors affecting the employment outcomes*

	<b>Range</b>	<b>Descriptive Interpretation</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>
4	3.26 – 4.00	Highly Influential (HI)	Overall influence is perceived to have efficient promotion system and receptive work environment.
3	2.51 – 3.25	Influential (I)	Overall influence is perceived to have effective promotion system and flexible work environment.
2	1.76 – 2.50	Moderately Influential (MI)	Overall influence is perceived to have reactive promotion system and with decent work environment.
1	1.00 – 1.75	Slightly Influential (SI)	Overall influence is perceived to have good promotion system and poor work environment.

Table 3.

*Rubric to interpret the impact of linkages*

	<b>Range</b>	<b>Descriptive Interpretation</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>
4	3.26 – 4.00	Completely Satisfied (CS)	Overall satisfaction of the factor meets my requirements and expectations All the time.
3	2.51 – 3.25	Mostly Satisfied (MS)	Overall satisfaction of the factor meets my requirements and expectations most the time.
2	1.76 – 2.50	Somewhat Satisfied (SS)	Overall satisfaction of the factor meets my requirements and expectations sometimes.
1	1.00 – 1.75	Not Satisfied (NS)	Overall satisfaction of the factor does not meet my requirements and expectations.

**Ethical Consideration**

The respondents of the study were assured that they were not coerced to participate. The consent of the graduate students was obtained through the consent form they signed, agreeing to all the conditions indicated. The researcher assured the respondents that the Data Privacy Act was observed and that company names were not identified in the study. It was also assured in the cover letter that all the data gathered will merely be utilized for the purposed of the study. Other information about the respondents such as company name, name of the person, and age will regarded with utmost confidentiality.

In addition, the respondents were furnished with the findings of the study. It will also be disseminated through the following: a hard copy for the respondents, the hospitality management department, and the university library for future access.

The researcher will ensure that the study will objectively undertake to address possible problems and issues in the graduates. The researcher assured that respondents did not suffer physical, emotional, and psychological harm during their participation in the study. The benefits of the study were also clearly stated in the letter given to them.

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